



# VIRTUAL PATIENT MEETUP

*CRAFTING PATIENT TESTIMONY*

Saturday, April 25, 2020 from 1-2pm



# Why Activism Is So Important



- No Ballot Initiative Option
  - HB 2231 from 1997
- Reliant on elected Texas State Senators and Representatives

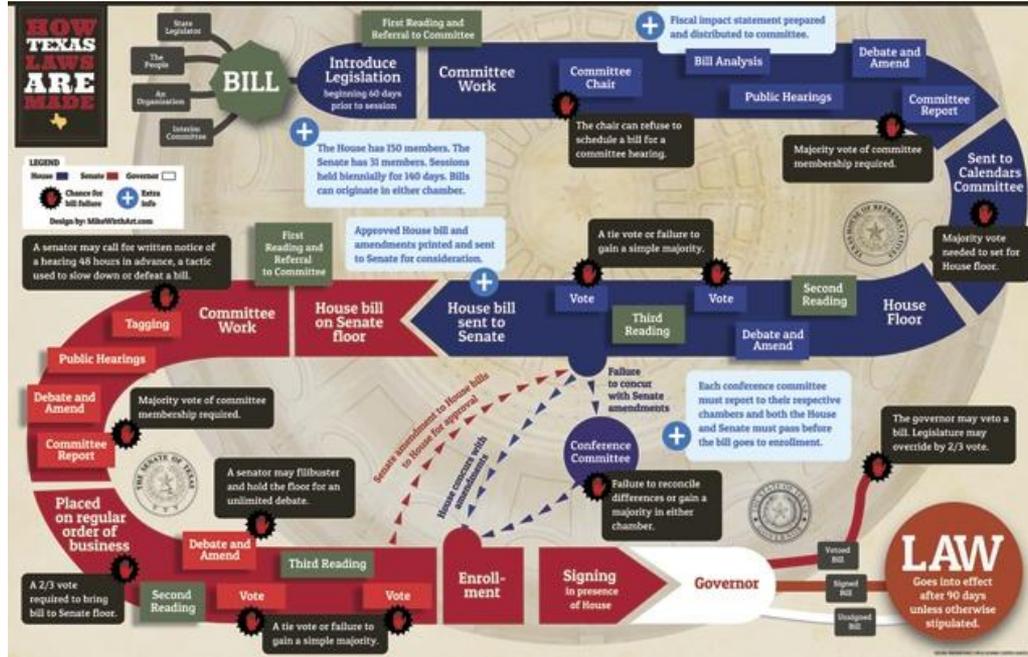
# Political Cycle

- Primary Runoff Election
  - Early Voting: starts **July 6, 2020** | Election Day: **July 14, 2020**
- During the summer, political parties hold state conventions to update their platforms. These are very important because it give guidance to elected officials and helps the Party craft their messaging.
- Voters must register by October 5th, 2020 to participate in General Elections
- General Election
  - Early Voting: **October 19-23rd, 2020**| Election Day: **November 3rd, 2020**
- Legislators start to prefile bill on **November 9th , 2018**

Texas Marijuana Policy Voter Guide: <https://www.texasnorml.org/votersguide/>



# Legislative Process



- Meets every 2 years
- 140 day in each session

# Who Represents You?

To find your Federal and State Senators and Representatives go to <https://fyi.capitol.texas.gov/Home.aspx> or Google: “Who represents me.”



Who Represents Me?  
**Home**

About Contact

Find District Member Information District Information

Street Address:

City: , TX

ZIP Code:

District Type:

Submit

**Notice:**  
Read cautions about [matching addresses to districts](#).

*Who Represents Me* provides information about current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education. Find out when information about [new districts and new members](#) is added to the website.

[Home](#) | [Find District](#) | [Member Information](#) | [District Information](#) | [Texas Redistricting](#) | [District Viewer](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Top](#)

# Learn More About Your Legislators

- Who is the legislator?
- How have they voted?
- Review their biography
- Review the types of bills they have authored or co-sponsored
- Check out their social media
- What committees do they sit on?
- Which committees are important to us?

**House:** Criminal Jurisprudence, Public Health

**Senate:** Criminal Justice, Health & Human Services

Use this knowledge to connect with officials and customize your talking points

Helpful Link: <https://capitol.texas.gov/MnuMyTLO.aspx>

# Helpful Tips for Crafting Testimony

- Keep your personal testimony to one page. (*During a hearing, you will have a max of three minutes to tell your story.*)
- Start off with your name and your support for medical cannabis. (*Please note we will not include bill numbers at this time, keep generic for use.*)
- A moving story has these elements: a protagonist (you, a family member), an antagonist (law enforcement, unjust laws, injury, disease), a plot (the chain of events), the climax (the most important event) and a theme (the lesson we want legislators to learn from the story).
- Select your top 3 talking points and focus on them. (*Research on your elected officials will help you customize.*)
- If you have to use medical terms or a specific name for an illness, do briefly describe what it means so that those seeing your testimony can understand your story better. (*Use reliable sources when referencing your medical condition.*)

# Helpful Tips for Crafting Testimony

*(continued)*

- Stay away from making claims about anything or anyone but yourself, but if you must, then do **cite your sources**.
- Read over your testimony a few times to make sure you are clear in what you want to say and to ensure that there are no errors. *(Keep in mind that once your testimony is submitted, it could be further edited for length, clarity, grammar, layout, adding of bill numbers and punctuation.)*
- Stay on subject. The subject is marijuana, unjust laws, the victims of unjust laws, and how marijuana heals us.
- Sign off with your name, city and any contact information that you would like to include. Pictures are a great way to personalize your testimony.
- Do not include any profanity, obscenity, slurs or threats in your testimony. Those will not be included.
- Save any criticisms and accusations for another time. **This is the time to focus on your story.**

Dear Texas Legislators,

My name is Major David Bass. I served twenty-five years in the U.S. Army. I am a veteran of Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I use cannabis as medicine. I am sixty percent disabled for chronic pain from injuries I received in the Army and for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) related to my service in Iraq. I use cannabis because it is safer and more effective than opioid pain medications and psychotropic drugs. The opioid medications are addictive and I would have to take them the rest of my life. The psychotropic drugs have terrible side effects. Cannabis allows me to function normally without the pain and without the symptoms of PTSD.

The problem is that in Texas, I am a criminal for using cannabis. I purchase my cannabis illegally and I use it illegally. But I do not live my life like a criminal. I have been married for thirty-eight years, I own my home, I pay my taxes, I vote—I am a productive, honest citizen in my community. What I need is to be able to talk to my primary care physician about cannabis. I need to be able to purchase cannabis that has been grown in a state-regulated grow facility and sold in a state licensed dispensary. I am a retired Army officer and a proud veteran of two wars. I do not want to be labeled a criminal in my state. But if I have to choose between addictive pain medications and psychotropic drugs that make me nonfunctional, or cannabis, then I choose cannabis. My health is primarily my responsibility. I have to make a logical choice. And my experience the past seven years using cannabis as medicine proves that it is an effective medication for chronic pain and PTSD.

I hope that you will listen to Texas veterans and allow us legal access to this plant that heals us and allows us to lead productive lives as proud citizens of Texas.

Respectfully,

Major David E. Bass, U.S. Army, Retired  
Killeen, Texas  
dave@texasnorml.org



# Next Steps:

- Send testimony draft to [Jax@TexasNORML.org](mailto:Jax@TexasNORML.org) for feedback.
- Share final draft with Texas NORML, your sitting legislators and any candidates you are following. (*Please note that Texas NORML's goal is to use these testimonies leading up to and during the legislative session, including in hearing binders for committee members.*)
- Stay tuned for potential Texas Compassionate Use Program Interim Hearings
- Participate in Elections and Conventions!
- Additional Resources: <https://www.texasnorml.org/activism/activist-training-guide/>